

NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
2002-2003 APPLICATION

BP-55-04

Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application.

Application Requirements:

- RESPONSES to the information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS and ACCURATE.**
No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in responding to the statements
- USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable), and 4.** Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
- Applications must be typed on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Twelve-point or larger computer font or fourteen-pitch or larger typewritten font must be used. This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.
- Keyboarded responses to all the statements below must be no more than a total of four pages. Keyboard and number the statement followed by the response. Format your response for clarity.
- The information on page 4 and the responses to statements must be copied on one side of the page.** The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be copied on one side of the page. Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4, and the keyboarded responses together, in that same order.
- The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.
- The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by December 15, 2002, with the Itemized List of District Applications form.** Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application:		
Type of School	Grade Levels	Practice Name <u>Shakespeare on Trial</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middle School	<u>7&8</u>	Number of Schools with Practice <u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School		Number of Districts with Practice
<input type="checkbox"/> High School		Location <input type="checkbox"/> Urban/City <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban With Urban Characteristics
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town <input type="checkbox"/> Rural

Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits.

<input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts)	<input type="checkbox"/> Gifted and Talented Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance and Counseling Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity and Equity Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development	<input type="checkbox"/> World Languages/Bilingual Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement	
	(family involvement and partnerships with business, community, school districts, and/or higher education)	

- Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.
- List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*,* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.
- Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.
- Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

*The 2002 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

The innovation of the *Shakespeare on Trial* project lies in its ability to challenge a diverse population of students through problem based learning. **The project targets the needs of learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, LEP, and gifted and talented students.** The diverse group of middle-school learners works cooperatively to study the works of Shakespeare. They interact via distance learning with high school students from a neighboring district and conduct video conference trials based on some of Shakespeare's most famous works. The project is multi-faceted and emphasizes the development of the cognitive and affective domains. Teacher created activities target higher order thinking skills and **utilize technology as an infor-mating tool (Zuboff,1988) to access high quality information and build critical learning relationships within and outside of the school.** Utilization of complex literary works combined with technology integration via video conferencing and accessing the internet motivates students to analyze texts and apply knowledge in a performance based manner. The structured and deliberate interactions among the diverse group of learners helps to dispel stereotypes and ignorance caused by labeling. It also teaches the students skills necessary to be successful in a variety of social forums. This cultivation of the affective and cognitive domains produces self-directed learners who feel more confident in unfamiliar learning situations.

This project encompasses a variety of objectives.

The students will be able to:

- Adapt their behavior to a more challenging social environment.
- Demonstrate tolerance and respect for each other's learning styles and differences.
- Work as teams to complete specialized tasks.
- Evaluate and synthesize text for character motives, author's purpose, and extrapolation of themes.
- Integrate knowledge acquired from panel discussions, research, and text readings to formulate an argument and draw conclusions.
- Synthesize, apply, and transfer skills to new contexts

The project builds an in-depth understanding of the text. For example, last year following the reading of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, special education, gifted and talented, and LEP students worked together to interpret and reenact scenes, discuss and analyze character traits, and comprehend the complex writing of Shakespeare. Students then collaborated to construct a courtroom trial and prosecuted Lady Macbeth. Our students acted as the prosecution and the high school students were the defense.

In preparation for the trials, the entire group receives an overview of courtroom procedures and the legal process. To enhance the students understanding of proper courtroom procedures, the students conduct two panel interviews with local attorneys. The attorneys conduct question and answer sessions based on courtroom procedures and developing arguments. Students learn specific techniques for writing opening and closing statements, witness preparation, utilizing active listening, and formulating objections and responding to them.

Once the students demonstrate an understanding of the legal process through modeling and practice activities they work in groups to design the trial. Teams are set up,

just like in any large trial. One group is responsible for the construction of questions and responses for each of the witnesses based on their research and character analysis. Another group of students conducts research through the internet to design authentic costumes and props. The students elect a team lawyers. Every student has the chance of being picked. The team of lawyers generates opening statements, reviews courtroom objections, and revises witness questions based on the research from the rest of the teams. Each group designates a student leader to report the daily status of their progress to the class and teacher to keep the project focused.

Then the students organize materials and rehearse, just like real law teams, in the mock court room days prior to the actual trial. Our students prepare the prosecution's side of the case, and AP English students from a local high school prepare the defense. Two days prior to the actual trial, the prosecution and defense, reveal their witness lists and create possible cross-examination questions. The trial takes place in the distance learning lab through video conferencing and lasts approximately three days. Our special education and LEP students participate side-by-side with the gifted and talented students and compete against the AP English students from the high school.

The project promotes high achievement on multiple-levels. The special education and LEP students are exposed to literature that is above and beyond the regular curriculum. They are challenged and stretched to utilize higher-order thinking skills (Bloom, 1958) to synthesize, analyze, evaluate Shakespeare's works. The students spend an average of four days a week, 90 minutes a day, for 10 weeks in class with the gifted and talented students, engaged in high level learning activities. They are fully engaged in the gifted and talented curriculum. Modifications are made when appropriate but all students receive the same high energy instruction.

This year the Globe Theater in London adopted our classes and we are engaged in a series of five interactive video conference lessons with actors, set designers, and writers. The lessons will culminate with our students writing sonnets based on the instruction provided by the Globe Theater. The Theater will judge the sonnets and publish winners on their website.

2. List the specific Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross Content Workplace Readiness Standards, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standards. Provide an example to substantiate your response.

The Macbeth project addresses many of the NJCCCS and CCWRS. Emphasis is placed on the following standards:

Visual and Performing Arts

Standard 1.3 All students will utilize art elements and art media to create artistic products and performances.

- Students utilize the internet and video conferencing to produce a courtroom trial.

Internet research provides students with information to develop authentic costumes and props, creating a comprehensive Shakespearean experience. Video conferencing enhances the experience by providing a forum for the students to perform.

Language Arts Literacy

Standard 3.1 Students will speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.

- They present information, ask questions, and cross-examine witnesses as part of the video conference trial. Our students interact with AP English students and their own classmates. Students speak in a clear and concise manner to defend their positions.

Standard 3.2 All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to gain information from a variety of sources.

- They actively engage in listening or formulate appropriate responses to questions. In addition to the performance in the trial, students interview local attorneys and must take notes. Last year, the students were interviewed by the local media and had to respond appropriately based on the questions asked.

Standard 3.3 All students will write in a clear, concise, and organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.

- Students write witness statements, opening and closing statements, character analysis papers, oaths. Students synthesize information from research, text, interviews, and audio, visual media.

Standard 3.4 All students will read a variety of materials and text with comprehension and critical analysis.

- Students read critically with the purpose of interpreting. Last year the students read *Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare. Passages are identified to support point of view, motives, and characters roles.

Cross-content Workplace readiness standards

Standard 2 All students will use information, technology and other tools.

- Students use the internet and video conferencing as informing tools. They conduct research on the book, witnesses, court process, and legal strategies. They access high quality information about Shakespeare and use e-mail and video conferences to communicate and apply information and build learning relationships.

Standard 3 All students will use critical thinking, decision making and problem solving skills.

- Students with diverse learning and social styles work cooperatively and collaboratively to develop original thoughts and ideas. Students decided on witness lists, relative information, reliable and dependable students to act as lawyers. Information from a variety of sources is analyzed and synthesized for appropriateness and completeness.

Standard 4 All students will demonstrate self-management skills.

- Students are presented must excel in a variety of forums, i.e. interviewing professionals; questioning/debating high school students; collaborating and cooperating as part of a peer groups and legal team; and talking to the media. Students must adjust behaviors according to the forum in which they are placed. Students observe the actions of their peers and evaluate and modify their own performance accordingly.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the

practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

The *Shakespeare on Trial* project was designed to address two primary needs: 1.) foster higher order thinking skills in exceptional students, and 2.) promote social acceptance and tolerance of diversity. The project incorporated many strategies: research with historical documents, group and class discussion, debate, performance, textual analysis, and writing. Knowledge and skill based classroom assessments provide accurate descriptive feedback to students and teachers throughout the project relative to achieving the cognitive objectives.

Surveys were administered prior to beginning the project and then again after completing the project to assess the affective gains made by students. Individual student interviews were also conducted. The surveys were ranked on a hundred point scale. Students were asked questions relating to cooperative/collaborative grouping, benefits and apprehensions to working with students of different academic and socio-economic backgrounds, and content knowledge relative questions. There were twenty questions total, each rated on a scale from 1-5 (5 being the highest) totaling 100 points.

The pre-project survey produced a mean score was 73%. The results indicated apprehension toward working with the gifted and talented students and almost no knowledge of Shakespeare. Upon completion of the project, students completed the same survey and perceptions changed favorably. **The mean score on the post-survey was 91%.** Students overall behavior, attendance, academic attitude, and tolerance/acceptance of others greatly improved. These survey results were supported by interviews with the students. Students who were reluctant to participate in academics prior to the project became motivated and interested. The exceptional students' performance in other subjects improved as well. Several special education students said that they were not excited about reading Shakespeare but the trial greatly increased their motivation and understanding. The students remarked that their understanding and appreciation of Macbeth was enhanced by the video conference trial. **Students stated that the project was a motivating factor to attend school** and attendance records indicate significant improvements for several students when compared to the previous year.

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

Shakespeare on Trial is a multifaceted project that can be easily replicated. Collaboration between diverse groups of learners can occur in a variety of forums. Once a relationship is established between the different groups of learners any project can be carried out with positive outcomes. If the class is language arts based for example, as in the Macbeth trial, the **use of any open-ended literary work** allows students to construct a trial based on the plot. The Macbeth project was conducted via video conferencing; if this technology is not readily available the project can be conducted between classes or between grade levels. There are no limits on the methods of replication; the project will be successful regardless of resource availability. Key aspects for replication include:

- Building a positive learning relationships within your school between another teacher and class.
- Fostering a learning relationship with a class from another school (optional).
- Choosing open-ended learning materials and focus on cognitive and affective outcomes supported by effective learning activities.